

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 3 and 10–11 have been amended. Claims 12 and 13 have been added.

Claims 3, 7 and 10–11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 3, 10 and 11 have been amended to overcome the rejection.

Claims 3, 7 and 10–11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishii et al. (U.S. Patent 6,389,672) in view of Busler (U.S. Patent 3,431,548). For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

There is no suggestion or motivation for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Busler with Ishii to arrive at the claimed invention.

Ishii discloses tape-like member 1 constructed by joining together holder units 10, each which has a recess 7 for holding a product (col. 4, lines 41–46). In Ishii, the holder units are joined to each other by couplers 8a, 8b (see figs. 5(a)–5(d); col. 4, lines 41–46). Busler discloses carrier strips joined to each other by a snap member 43 and receptacle 44 located at the ends of the carrier strip (col. 2, lines 30–32).

Since Ishii already has a connecting structure for connecting the component storage units 2, there is no motivation or need to look at the connecting structure elements of the carrier strips in Busler. Thus, modifying the Ishii holder units to have the connecting structure of the Busler carrier strips would not have been an obvious substitution. One skilled in the art would not have combined these references at the relevant time to arrive at the claimed invention.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims based upon the combination of references is respectfully requested.

With regards to claim 3, none of the references disclose or suggest “wherein the first connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locking member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member, and the second connecting portion of the second tape member comprises a locked member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member” as recited in amended claim 3.

Ishii discloses tape-like member 1 constructed by joining together holder units 10, each which has a recess 7 for holding a product (col. 4, lines 41–46). In Ishii, the holder units are joined to each other by couplers 8a, 8b (see figs. 5(a)–5(d); col. 4, lines 41–46). The couplers 8a, 8b are not coupled to an end portion of the holder unit. Thus, Ishii does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment couple to the second end portion of the first tape member. Ishii also does not disclose or suggest a locked member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member. Therefore, Ishii does not disclose or suggest all the elements of the claimed invention.

Busler discloses a carrier strip 41 with a snap member 43 that is coupled to a receptacle 44 of a second carrier strip (col. 2, lines 25-32). However, Busler does not disclose or suggest that the snap member 43 is coupled to an end portion of a first carrier strip or that the receptacle 44 is coupled to an end portion of a second carrier strip. Thus, Busler does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment coupled to the end portion of the carrier strip and a locked member attachment coupled to the end portion of another carrier strip. Therefore, even if combined, the references do not disclose or suggest all the elements of the claimed invention.

Furthermore, it would not have been an obvious modification for one of ordinary skill in the art to have tape member attachments coupled to end portions of the tape members. The Office action states,

To provide the connecting portions as integral attached members as opposed to unitary members of the tape would have been an obvious modification of the structural combination, as it has been long held to provide a unitary structure in discrete elements where the elements work the same or similarly has been held to be obvious modification of an existing structure to one of ordinary skill in the art (Office action 1/26/2006, page 3).

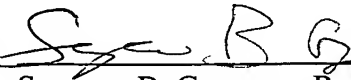
As stated in the Background of the Invention of the application, in conventional tape connecting operations, end portions of the new and old tapes use an exclusive connecting jig to align the tapes and then the tapes are connected to each other by adhesive tape, or use a fitting embossed portion to connect the tapes to each other. Also, none of the prior art of carrier tapes and component storage units cited by the examiner have tape member attachments coupled to end portions of the tape members. Therefore, it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify a carrier tape or component storage unit to have tape member attachments coupled to end portions of the carrier tape or component storage unit.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

Appln. No. 10/705,344
Amdt. dated April 26, 2006
Reply to Office Action dated January 26, 2006

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same
to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36261.

Respectfully submitted,
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